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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8788  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 6009  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3220  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 3432  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 5188  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5859  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0473  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN MILITARY PULLS OUT OF WHINSEC

REF: 07 LA PAZ 2856

Classified By: EcoPol Chief Mike Hammer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Incoming 2008 Bolivian Army Commander General Freddy Mackay Peralta told Military Group officers January 11 that the army would no longer send officers to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. Mackay said the decision was "political," but offered no further details or commentary on the subject. Other branches have confirmed this is a military-wide action to boycott WHINSEC.

12. (C) No Bolivian security forces had been sent to WHINSEC in 2008, although 40 were slated for WHINSEC training in Fiscal Year 2008 and a Bolivian was slated to take over the vice-commandant position, a prestigious post. Those currently in training or serving as instructors at WHINSEC will finish their terms and other U.S.-supported military training will continue unaffected. In fact, Mackay signaled that the Bolivian military is still interested in receiving U.S. training even if WHINSEC has been ruled out. Until January 11, we were uncertain if candidate changes and slow submissions were politically motivated or simply new 2008 commanders reshuffling to send their own people. Venezuela stopped sending armed forces personnel to WHINSEC in 2005 and cycled out its last student in 2007.

13. (U) Bolivian President Evo Morales has made pulling the Bolivian military out of WHINSEC a standard stump-speech topic since he took office in January, 2006. His recent criticism of WHINSEC during an October 9 Press Conference (reftel) is typical, when he announced Bolivia would "gradually" stop sending troops to WHINSEC, which he referred to as its former name, the School for the Americas (SOA). Morales asserted the institute teaches "high ranking officers to confront their own people, to identify social movements as their enemies."

Comment  
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14. (C) After almost two straight years of railing against WHINSEC and threatening to cut off Bolivian participation,

Morales finally dropped the other boot. The timing coincides with WHINSEC 2008 training cycles, but also with the 2008 turnover in the military's high command, perhaps making the change easier to impose on new commanders. This decision will not endear Evo to the armed forces, who covet WHINSEC training opportunities.

15. (C) Comment Continued: Although Morales' administration constantly criticizes the U.S. military cooperation and anti-narcotics efforts publicly, privately cooperation has proceeded unimpeded at the working level. Morales is increasingly following up years-old rhetorical threats against U.S. cooperation with concrete action. He also passed vague restrictions on foreign aid clearly aimed at the U.S. in 2007 (reftel b). It is unclear if following through on the WHINSEC threat is a stand-alone action or if it will lead to action on other rhetorical threats against U.S. military cooperation in Bolivia, which Evo has typically packaged in the same anti-"imperialist" speeches. Evo has repeatedly asserted it is a question of "national dignity" that "uniformed armed foreigners" would have to leave the country and that he would not allow foreign military bases. Both comments are confusing as we have no bases in Bolivia and he consistently fails to identify exactly what forces (DEA agents, MILGP, Embassy Marines...) he wants to kick out of the country. Like many of Morales' acerbic comments, these "general" comments about "uniformed armed foreigners" are clearly directed at us, not other foreign national military representatives in Bolivia (i.e. Venezuelan, Cuban).  
End Comment.

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